



PRESS RELEASE

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IRS – Criminal Investigation

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North Carolina Man Charged in Fraudulent U.S. Treasury Check Scheme

A federal grand jury sitting in Raleigh, North Carolina, returned an indictment, which was unsealed today against a Raleigh man, charging him with one count of conspiracy to commit theft of public money and 22 counts of theft of public money, announced Acting Assistant Attorney General Caroline D. Ciraolo of the Justice Department's Tax Division and U.S. Attorney Thomas G. Walker for the Eastern District of North Carolina.

According to the indictment, in 2011 and 2012, Wilfredo Acosta Hidalgo conspired with two check cashers to cash U.S. Treasury checks issued as a result of fraudulent tax returns filed in the names of third-parties. Hidalgo provided U.S. Treasury checks ranging in value from \$4,000 to \$8,000 to the check cashers. These checks were issued to third parties in whose names the fraudulent tax returns were filed. The third-party payees purportedly lived in Florida, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The check cashers deposited the U.S. Treasury checks into their business bank accounts and then provided Hidalgo with cash equal to the value of the check minus a check cashing fee. The third-party payees were not present when the checks were cashed.

If convicted, Hidalgo faces a statutory maximum sentence of five years in prison for the conspiracy charge and 10 years in prison for each count of theft of public funds. He also faces substantial monetary penalties, supervised release and restitution.

Acting Assistant Attorney General Ciraolo and U.S. Attorney Walker commended special agents of IRS-Criminal Investigation, who investigated the case and Trial Attorneys Nathan P. Brooks and Lauren M. Castaldi of the Tax Division, who are prosecuting this case. Acting Assistant Attorney General Ciraolo also thanked the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of North Carolina for its assistance.

An indictment merely alleges that crimes have been committed. The defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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